

Family Investment Program

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Purpose

The goal of Iowa's Family Investment Program (FIP) is to gain self-sufficiency for needy families with children. There is a five-year lifetime limit for receiving FIP benefits, with exceptions in hardship cases. FIP is not an entitlement program. Recipients must show they are working toward self-sufficiency.

Who

- After years of steadily declining caseloads, the trend reversed and caseloads increased during the 2009-10 recession. Caseloads are again falling. In July 2011, 16,645 families were receiving FIP, down 7 percent from 17,933 a year earlier. Caseloads are projected to continue a gradual decline.
- Seventy-seven percent of recipients were one-parent families, 6 percent had both parents in the home, and 17 percent were children living with a relative. Data as of April 2011.
- The typical FIP family is headed by a single Caucasian woman aged between 20 and 29 with two children.

What

- Adults must work toward self-sufficiency in exchange for benefits. They receive employment and training services via the PROMISE JOBS contract with the Iowa Department of Workforce Development.
- FIP provides monthly cash payments based on family size and income. Eligibility and benefit guidelines include incentives for recipients to earn money from jobs. The average monthly grant was \$338 in SFY 2011.
- The average time a family receives FIP is about 21 months. The maximum is 60 months.
- Only families with a hardship preventing them from being self-supporting can get FIP beyond the 60-month lifetime limit. In SFY 2011, an average of 235 families monthly received benefits under the hardship exemption.

How are we doing?

- FIP benefits are now distributed via a debit-like swipe card rather than paper checks. This increases security and accuracy, and eliminates check-cashing charges.
- An increasing percentage of people leaving FIP do not return to the program. In SFY 2011, 72.5 percent families that left FIP stayed off FIP for at least one year. This was the first upswing in this measurement in three years.

